

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Monday, December 13, 2004

Members Present: Mr. Staton, Mr. Martin, Ms. Cooper, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Drew, Senator Fair, Mr. Hall, Mrs. Marlowe, Mr. Stowe, Representative Walker, and Mr. Wilson

I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Mr. Staton welcomed members and guests to the meeting and announced that the 2004 edition of Where Are We Now had been released to the press and public that morning.

II. **Approval of the Minutes:** The minutes of the October 2004 meeting were approved as distributed.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

A. **Academic Standards and Assessments:** Mr. Wilson reported on behalf of the subcommittee. He reported that the Subcommittee had reviewed the report on the new South Carolina Social Studies Academic Standards. Based on feedback from the Geographic Alliance, the Subcommittee requested that the State Department of Education address the omission of geography in the standards for grades seven and nine. The new standards were approved with the indicated revisions.

Mr. Wilson next presented the Subcommittee recommendations regarding the report on the review of the South Carolina Science Academic Standards. The Subcommittee recommended adoption of the report as written with the addition that the revised standards include instruction on the development of new energy sources. The recommendations were adopted as presented.

Mr. Wilson presented the Subcommittee recommendations regarding the approval of the South Carolina Readiness Assessment (SCRA) to 1) approve the use of the SCRA assessment process for Kindergarten and first grade; 2) improve the reliability and interpretability of the SCRA results for instructional and achievement improvement purposes; 3) as specified in the EAA, ensure that SCRA results should not be reported for accountability purposes; and 4) find an assessment procedure which can be used to identify and assist second grade students who are not ready for the performance expectations in grade three. Mr. Wilson also indicated that the Subcommittee had requested that the State Department of Education conduct a study of the correlation of student readiness and performance on the grade 3 PACT tests. After discussion, the Subcommittee recommendations were approved.

Mr. Wilson also presented the Subcommittee recommendation that high school graduation rate be added to the calculation of school district report card ratings. The Subcommittee proposed that the addition of the high school graduation rate to the ratings system would provide a performance measure of the entire school district's preparation and support of students to earn their diplomas. Following discussion, the recommendation was adopted.

B. **EIA and Improvement Mechanisms:** Mr. Daniel reported on behalf of the Subcommittee. He presented the Subcommittee's EFA, EIA, and EAA budget and proviso recommendations for Fiscal Year 2005-2006, which included a \$172.9 million increase in total funding for schools and school districts. The recommendations were

adopted after discussion. Ms. Barton also presented an update on the funding model as proposed by the EOC in December 2003.

C. **Parent and Community Involvement**: Mr. Hall reported that the Subcommittee had not met because of scheduling difficulties.

D. **Public Awareness**: Mr. Martin reported on behalf of the subcommittee. Mr. Martin explained that the PAIRS project is a collaborative initiative intended to marshal efforts supporting children's literacy across the entire state. Mr. Stowe presented the calendar for the PAIRS project. The rollout of the PAIRS project is scheduled for February 17, 2005. Mr. Stowe asked EOC members to identify reading programs in their area which involve adults providing reading assistance to children for inclusion in the PAIRS project.

E. **Administration**: There was no report.

V. **Remarks from Key Constituencies**: Dr. Karen Woodward, Superintendent of Lexington School District One and Dr. Anne Elam, Director of Secondary Education for Lexington School District One, presented the implementation of career clusters in their school district. The goals of their program are to keep students enrolled in high school and to graduate more students. Each secondary student develops an Individualized Graduation Plan based on his or her career interests. Students and counselors identify courses and course sequences from the district curriculum frameworks to accomplish one of 34 major interest areas. An assessment procedure in the seventh and eighth grades is used to help students identify their career interests.

VI. **Other Business**:

(1) Mr. Potter provided an update on the study of high school data quality and the graduation rate. This study is being conducted with the assistance of the Data Quality Advisory Committee. The student records for ninth grade students attending six high schools in South Carolina during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years were analyzed over the five-year period until Summer 2004 to identify those who graduated from high school or left the school before graduation. While there are problems with the accurate collection of data for the electronic databases currently in use in school districts, the system was found to be adequate for collecting the needed data to monitor students' progress through the school system. Approximately 53% of the students enrolled in the ninth grade in 1999-2000 in the schools studied graduated from their high school with a diploma at the end of the five years studied. The graduation or enrollment status of approximately one-fourth of the students could not be determined from the available data. Further analyses of the data collected for this study will be conducted.

(2) Mr. Walker expressed his concerns about the delay in issuing school and district report cards and asked how the State Department of Education can prevent this from happening again in the future. He also expressed his concerns that the state testing program tests are not available in Spanish translation to assess students who have recently immigrated to the United States. The numbers of students whose first language is Spanish are increasing rapidly in communities in South Carolina.

There being no other business, the EOC adjourned.